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LOUISIANA
A Pageant of Yesterday
and To-Day
MAUD MAY PARKER

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A Pageant of Yesterday
and Today
MAUD MAY PARKER

UNIVERSITY
OF VIRGINIA

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To the Mothers
of our Louisiana Soldiers and Sailors
This little book is affectionately
and tenderly dedicated

PROLOGUE.

*(A trumpet is heard. Curtains are slightly drawn.—
Enter Herald.)*

Herald:

Good greetings, friends! Glad greetings, one and all!
Haste Ye! Make ready for our noble queen,
The Fair Louisiana, she who reigns
O'er more than half the mighty new-found world.
How tender is her sway, and yet how strong,
To hold within her hands, like children's toys,
The splendid regions of the northern lakes,
The mystic, dreamy, soulful south-land far.
See, how she comes with Springtime in her tread,
Upspringing 'neath her feet the clover sweet,
Upon her head the starry jessamine—
Plucked from the whiteness of the Milky Way.
Magnolias are her cheeks, and her rich lips
The ripened seed of all Magnolia blooms;
Wood-brown her eyes with depths as calm and clear
As gentle bayous overhung by trees.
France wears her as a jewel in her crown,
Brave, noble France! And yet in years to come
France must resign this gem, must yield this gift
To that strong mother of a younger race,
America, born of the giant might
Of all the mingled forces of the world.
Yet let us not o'er-vision you with dreams.
Louisiana comes; greet her with joy!

ACT I.
KATLAHA'S MARRIAGE FEAST.

CHARACTERS.

Louisiana

Kwahonoshe.....Chief of the Colapissas

Okesok.....Chief of the Choctaws

Shamgolo.....Son of Okesok

Katlaha.....Daughter of Kwahonoshe

(Indians, squaws, and children)

SCENE.

(A Southern forest: live oaks, magnolias, and long-leaf pines. On either side are palmettoes and yuccas in full bloom. In the distance are maize and tall pampas grasses, and through the vista is seen the wide expanse of the Mississippi River, on whose banks, drawn up in number, are Indian canoes.)

In the foreground is a throne-chair, on which Louisiana is seated.

On the ground, in a wide semicircle, Indian chiefs sit in council, and standing in the centre of the ring is Kwahonoshe.)

Louisiana:

Hail Kwahonoshe! What say now the chiefs?
For three nights thus you sit and hold debate.

Kwahonoshe:

Louisiana, we have watched the signs.
Two nights ago the moon rose fiery red,
And shooting stars trailed through the breathless night.
The owlet hooted, and the sleeping cocks
Began to crow, mistaken in the dawn.
Then, old Pahoha let his arrows fly
In sign and signal of pernicious war.
But, as we stood with all our bows new-strung,
Out of the rainless sky there came a sound,
Heloha's laying of her thunder-eggs,
And Malatha, her spouse, with lightnings rent
The great trees.—So, in truth, we knew full well
They frowned upon our enterprise.

Louisiana: Right glad
Am I. I love not wars! What then did ye?

Kwahonoshe:
We sent the pact of peace; our arrows hung
With fledgling doves. And from the Choctaw chief
His squaw is come, to ask in seal thereof
Katlaha's hand for Shamgolo.

Louisiana: And gives
Your squaw consent?

Kwahonoshe:
A squaw thinks as her chief.

(Sounds of approval from the chiefs, who rise. Enter old squaw with Katlaha, other squaws, and maidens.)

Louisiana:
Katlaha, come my child, did'st know that ere
The moon shines white upon yon yucca blooms,
Shamgolo comes to claim you as his bride?

Katlaha:
Entreat me not, O Kwahonoshe, I
Know not this youth. No Colapissa yet
Has wed when love came not to light the fires
Within the wigwam, nor to weave the mats
The bride walks over to her marriage couch.

Kwahonoshe:

Who speaks of love? You stand and idly prate
As any forest maid that saunters forth
Beneath the stars to seek adventure. What
Know you of love?

Katlaha:

Once long ago, before
The Colapissas moved from Talcatcha,
I saw a stranger on our shores. He stood
With arms outstretched to greet the golden sun,
And when he saw me, smiled and asked if I
Were dawn just stept from out the rosy East.

Kwahonoshe:

How now? And so for this strange unknown youth
You dream and prate of love, and now defy me?

Katlaha:

My father, force me not! Would not this chief
Content him with another maid? There be,
O Kwahonoshe, some more fair to meet
His fierce desire. Louisiana, speak!
I do entreat you speak in my behalf.

Louisiana:

Katlaha, you must give consent. The tribes
Be then at peace. Young Shamgolo is tall
And strong, your ogla needs his strength of arm;

Shamgolo:

Belovèd come! Our marriage seats are spread,
Old Kwahonoshe and Okesok wait!

They make agreement, but we give consent;
They bind the fate of tribes, but love binds us.

(He leads her gently, and they take their seats. Suddenly the music changes. It becomes rough and barbaric. The other Indians, men, women, and children, gather together. They lock arms and move sidewise, first in one direction and then in the other. A leader stands apart keeping time with two sticks, and with grunts and sounds and noise of tomtoms they follow the music. Finally one assumes leadership. They fall into a long line as each grasps the shoulders of the one in front. They are led through a series of serpentine movements, coiling closer and closer, until they resemble a huge snake. A Herald's bugle is heard. The music abruptly stops. The Indians, in startled amazement, rush for their bows and arrows, then, as if powerless, stand still with spanned bows. Curtain drawn for a moment only.)

ACT II.
ARRIVAL OF LA SALLE.

CHARACTERS.

Robert Cavelier de La Salle.....Canadian Adventurer
Zenobre Membré.....A Recollect Missionary
Jacques de la Metairie.....Notary
Francois de Boisrondet
Nika La Salle's Hunter
Sarget La Salle's Servant
Kwahonoshe
Okesok
Shamgolo
Katlaha
French gentlemen, priests, Indian guides, squaws
and children. Indians present in the last scene.

SCENE
(*Same as close of last.*)

Enter Herald.

Herald:
All hail, Louisiana!

Louisiana:
Herald, hail!

Kwahonoshe:
What means your bugle?

Herald:
Kwahonoshe, hear,
And all you chiefs assembled. On your shores
Are bark canoes in number. Their great prows
Bear images of strange design. And men,
With faces whiter than the moon, arrive
With cross-bows, swords, and flags they hold aloft.

Okesok:
Be these men Gods? Louisiana, read
The portent of their coming. Means it war?

Louisiana:
It means, Great Chief, that on this splendid land
Your sun is set, and shining in the East
A golden sun awakes a new-born day.
Already crumbled are your Temple mounds,
Already darkened are your Temple fires.

The wallèd towns your fathers builded them
Already are forgot; and burned out now
Your wigwam fires. For Nations, like the day,
Have their bright morn, their noon, their setting sun.

Okesok:

Our sun shall set not while we wield our bows!
The land is ours, our fathers gave it us.

(Enter La Salle accompanied by Zenobe Membré, Francois de Boisrondet, Jacques de la Metairie, Nika, Sarget, also other French gentlemen. With them are guides, squaws, and children; La Salle precedes them with sword in hand, Père Zenobe and the other priests carry rough crucifixes, Francois de Boisrondet a column on which are painted the Arms of France. The others carry lances, swords, and flags; the Indians, bows and arrows.)

Louisiana:

All hail, Robert Cavelier de La Salle!
And you, mon Père Zenobe Membré, and you,
Messieurs, my welcome, one and all!

La Salle:

All hail,
Louisiana! In the name of France
We come with purpose strong, backed by our swords,
To take possession for our noble king,
Louis le Grand, of France and of Navarre,
This mighty river that seeks outlet here,
And all the land that stretches on its shores,
From that wide region of the Algonquins far
To this of Colapissas by the Gulf.

Kwahonoshe :

That shall you not, you white-faced god! Our bows
And arrows and our tomahawks shall speak
Far louder than the names of kings unknown.

Père Zenobe :

My children, listen! Span you not your bows.
The king of France shall reign, and over all
The Bon Dieu stretches out his hands. Kneel down
Before the cross. Believe! Give him your souls,
And your allegiance give to France's king.

(He shows them the crucifix, and they turn away as if terrified. Shamgolo holds Katlaha trembling in his arms.)

Shamgolo :

Awake, beloved, from this strange alarm.
This is our marriage morn. What cause for fear?
What are these strangers, what their king, their cross?

Katlaha :

Shamgolo, clasp me close. I tremble still.
I hate their faces and their cold, dead god.

Shamgolo :

Think not on death, Katlaha. but on life.
Let us steal forth, beloved, through the dawn.
This is our day of love, and comes the night,
With throbbing hearts we'll dream beneath the stars.

(As they go out, Nika shows beads and trinkets to the Indians.)

Nika:

Be you not fools! These men, who claim your land,
Buy it with beads and gems. Our squaws have chains
Of precious worth.

Sarget
(*overhearing conversation*)

Take you this one of jade
For that sweet bride, as marriage gift. And this
Great robe to place before her wigwam fire.

(*Kwahonoshe is pleased, and the other Indians crowd
around, receiving gifts and examining the newly arrived
strangers, their costumes, swords, flags, etc.*)

Kwahonoshe:

These men be gods. We read not right the signs.
The fiery moon betokened their approach.

(*To La Salle*)

Is it in truth, you buy our lands and give
Us leave to stay? Perchance your noble chief
Would trade our furs and give us implements
To till the fields. Our Indian wheat grows tall,
And on a summer's day the tasseled corn
Waves, like the flags you carry, in the wind.

Francois de Boisrondet:

In truth it is a land fit for our king,
And in his name we now possess ourselves.

(He hands the column to La Salle who places it in the ground the others have been preparing. Père Zenobe plants the crucifix near by and at its foot a plate bearing the Arms of France. While this is being done the Te Deum is played softly.)

La Salle :

Louisiana, be our witness now
This land is ours and all contained therein.
By planting here this column we affirm
No white man's foot has ever trod this soil,
And by the holy cross we pledge ourselves
To bring the light of God to this new race.

Louisiana :

Right well you've spoken, Robert de La Salle!
We bear you witness. And now, gentlemen,
Your own insignia. Where be le notaire?
Monsieur La Metairie, stand forth! And you
Messieurs, sign each and all his parchment. Let
The great chiefs also set their seals thereto.

(While they are signing, the Te Deum becomes louder. Then is played the Domine, Salvum fac Regem.)

La Salle :

And now, Messieurs with one accord we shout
Vive! Vive! Le Roi de France et de Navarre!
Louis le Grand, Louis quatorze de France.

(Curtain.)

ACT III.
THE SIEUR de BIENVILLE
and
LA NOUVELLE ORLÉANS.

PRELUDE.
THE DREAM OF CRESCENT MOON.

SCENE 1.

Forest as before. Music. Louisiana still seated in throne-chair. In immediate foreground on a bed of Spanish moss are discovered Crescent Moon and Falaya, her Indian playmate. It is just before dawn. Through the semi-darkness are seen creeping stealthily out from the forest little live-oak trees hung with moss, which dance round them and hold lacy fingers to protect the sleeping children from the winds off the river.

As the scene gradually lightens, the flowers: violets, cherokee roses, yellow jessamine, trumpet-honeysuckle, and magnolias, play round them.

With a burst of light—Dawn enters and kisses them.
As Crescent Moon wakes they all vanish.

CHARACTERS.

Louisiana

Crescent Moon

Falaya Indian playmate to Crescent Moon

The Sieur de Bienville..... Governor of Louisiana Colony

Hubert Director General

Boisbriant.. } Lieutenants of the Regent, Louis Philippe

Chateaugué. }

The Chevalier de la Tour..... Engineer

The Sieur Pauget..... Assistant Engineer

Le Page du Pratz

Gentlemen, Artisans, Sailors, Indians.

SCENE 2.

Falaya:
(*Just awakened*)

Wake, Crescent Moon. I had a dream.

Crescent Moon:

A dream!

Falaya:

O! such a dream! I saw the oak trees come
And hold their mossy limbs to keep us warm.
And then the flowers bloomed—Magnolias
And violets and yellow jessamine—
How sweet they were!

Crescent Moon:

Ah! how I love them all!

Falaya:

I love the roses best. We have great vines
With blooms as white as milk at Oumas, where
Our wigwams are. The Cherokees in Spring
Would make you dance with joy, O Crescent Moon.

Crescent Moon:

But Cherokees have thorns!

Falaya :

I dreamed again

A sunbeam came and kissed us on the lips,
It danced above our eyes and then bent down.

Crescent Moon :

O, would that I had seen it! But I too
Have had a dream. I saw great galleons come
With gods in shining silk and glad array.

Falaya :

And did they come from France like that La Salle
My father told us of? Each night I think
To see him come again. Would he take you
My Crescent Moon? You would not go to France?

Crescent Moon :

Nay, not to France. Let France come here to us!
You still could be my hand-maid and I, then,
Would be a princess. Let us close our eyes
And dream the gods are come.

Falaya :

Nay, Crescent Moon,
The dawn is here.

Crescent Moon :

Not yet! The mocking birds
Have still not warbled to the rising sun.

(*They fold their arms round each other and go back to sleep. Enter the Sieur de Bienville, Hubert, Boisbriant, Chateaugué, Chevalier de la Tour, Sieur Pauget, Le Page du Pratz, with followers.*)

Bienville:

Louisiana, hail!

The Others:

All hail to you!

Louisiana:

Hail, Jean Baptiste le Moyne, and you, Hubert!
Right royally we greet you. Boisbriant
And Chateaugué, lieutenants of the king.
Bear you a message from His Majesty?

Chateaugué:

Louisiana, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne,
The Sieur de Bienville, and these chosen men
Speak in the name of France.

*Louisiana:
(To Bienville)*

Speak, then, that I

May hear.

Bienville:

Louis Philippe duc d'Orleans,
The Regent for His Majesty, the small
Young king, Louis le quinze, bids me to claim

In his name, witnessèd by you, the land
Once named Louisiane. Upon this stream,
Near to its triple mouth, he bids me build
A city passing fair.

Louisiana:

The dream once held
By noble Iberville.

Bienville:

Yea, Iberville
Our brother dreamed a dream. In this new France
Upon these Mississippi shores, where now
Palmetto wigwams sleep 'neath forest oaks,
Where tangled vines grow dense and yucca blooms
Mingle their fragrance with the moist dank earth,
He dreamed to find a child whose slender hand
Would plant the fleur-de-lys and make it bloom
Into a City fair, surpassed by none
Save France's own.

Louisiana:

And now, Messieurs, you come
To change this dream to deeds? In truth, 'tis well!
England grows strong and threatens. Lordly Spain
Would fain connect her high-roads from her forts
Of Pensacola to great Mexico.

Sieur Pauget:

Nay, fear you not! To-day we claim our own:
We dig our ditches and begin our roads.
The Chevalier La Tour has brought his plans.

La Tour:

Ay, plans to make the new world wake! and teach
England how futile is her strength and Spain
Her greed. With this great city, France shall reign
Supreme. The English colonies shall shrink
Within their narrow borders by the sea,
And from Canadian snow to yon blue Gulf
Great France shall rule.

Louisiana:

And you, Hubert, approve?

Hubert:

Our noble council has set seal thereon.
The New France grows. Biloxi is made strong,
Mobile is fortified, and now John Law
The grant is given to furnish ways and means
To build this colony o'er night. All France
Is now aflame with news thereof.

Le Page du Pratz:

Hence I

Am here. I beg the privilege, messieurs,
To see the fleur-de-lys in bloom. Grant me
A claim.

Bienville :

'Tis well.

(To La Tour)

And now, La Tour, your map.

Ah, yes, I see! Here are Les Esplanades,
And that black line, continuing this way,
Canals to chain. There, le Place D'Armes, and close
Beside, the Court and Church: and over there
For you Hubert, the Intendance. I shall
Build here upon this street, we'll name Royal
In honor of His Majesty. And here,
Because all cities must be gay at times
And sing and dance and make mad revelry,
We'll build our Opera House. And over there
Le Cimitière, like those of our own France,—
Not that we mean to die, messieurs, but comes
A time when death ends all.

(While he is talking, Bienville notices the sleeping children. He hands the maps to La Tour, who takes them, pointing out to the others the various plans contemplated. Approaching the children, he touches Crescent Moon.)

Bienville :

Awake, my child.

Falaya :

(To Crescent Moon)

See, Crescent Moon, the white-faced gods are come!

Crescent Moon:
(Looks long at Bienville, and then rises and puts her hand
in his)

You've come, monsieur, to bring New France to us?

Bienville:

Who are you, child? Whence come you?

Crescent Moon:

I am she

You've come in quest of. I am Crescent Moon.

Bienville:

Louisiana, speak! What means this child
Half moon, half flower, so like a wraith she seems?

Louisiana:

She is the dream of noble Iberville,
Which you will bring to perfect womanhood.
Meact Chasippi, whom the Indians call
Our Father of Great Waters, brought her here.
Like to a silver thread she lay so small,
So fragile in his dripping arms, and so
The Indians call her Crescent Moon. Her friends
Are all the winds and waters. All the flowers
Her playmates are. At dawn, this Indian child
And she are singing with the mocking-birds.
All nature loves this vision perfected.

Bienville:

And so, my child, you waited? Did you know
That I would come?

Crescent Moon :

Meact Chasippi said
That you would find me, and then I should be
A child of France.

Bienville :

In truth you shall! Messieurs,
See, what is here! This little Crescent Moon
New France has given birth to, we shall claim,
And in all honor to His Majesty,
Louis Philippe, le Dauphin, she shall be
La Nouvelle Orléans. Messieurs, salute!
With one accord salute the new-found child!

(They gather around her in surprise and rejoicing.)

Bienville :

Vive le Dauphin! La Nouvelle Orléans!

(He puts a little French flag in her hand. She stands waving it, Louisiana on one side of her and Falaya on the other.)

Bienville :

Shout with loud voices. Shout, that wind and wave,
That forest trees and flowers and song-birds, hear!
Shout, that your voices reach the shores of France,
The Crescent Maid! La Nouvelle Orléans!

All together—

(holding their swords aloft and waving flags) :
The Crescent maid! La Nouvelle Orléans!

(Curtain.)

ACT IV.
THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE.

CHARACTERS.

America

Louisiana

La Nouvelle Orléans

De Laussat.....Colonial Prefect of France

James Wilkinson..... Brigadier General U. S. Army

Wm. C. C. Claiborne....First American Governor of La.

Charpain.....Guard of Honor to French flag

Dusseuil.....Who lowers the French flag

LeGrand.....Who receives the lowered flag

Pontalba.....)

Poiré.....}.....Citizens

Marie.....)

A child.....)

American Troops, French Militia, Frenchmen, Spaniards,
Americans, Negroes, Indians, gaily dressed
women and children.

SCENE.

La Nouvelle Orléans.

(Place d'Armes; an open square with shade trees extending to the river, left, on which are seen gaily decorated boats.

On the right, the Hotel de Ville with overhanging balconies, and near by, the St. Louis Cathedral.

In the rear are buildings with balconies of wrought iron grille work, behind which sit handsomely dressed men and women.

In the immediate foreground is a flag pole, and waving in the breeze is seen the French flag. At its foot, as a guard of honor, stand French soldiers and citizens.

The Place d'Armes is crowded, as if awaiting a festive occasion. Here are seen Frenchmen, Spaniards, Americans, Indian women, dressed in modern indigo blue prints, with tired faces, carrying large baskets of dried leaves and roots. They sit in groups unmindful of the passing throng. Negro mammies pilot small children handsomely dressed in muslin and ribbons, their long black curls hanging beneath their French caps. Boys and girls are playing, and as the curtain rises are heard the martial strains of La Marseillaise.

As the music dies away, two citizens are discovered talking. They wave their hats and cheer.)

Mons. Pontalba:

La République, Vive! Vive la République!

Poiré:

Ma foi, monsieur Pontalba, think on it!

But yesterday, and we belonged to France!

Pontalba:

And then to Spain! Umph! how we hated it,
Ceded to Spain as if we had no rights.

Poiré:

And now, O worst of all, just as our hopes
Were stirred that France still needed us and claimed
Her own—comes Monsieur de Laussat and tells
This monstrous tale: France sells us like a toy!

Pontalba:

Be not too quick to judge, Monsieur Poiré,
Old heads are wisest, eh mon fils? Suppose
We try it once; America is strong,
We grow too great for France to govern well.
As one with these United States we make
A foe all England cannot conquer. So,
Who knows but that Napoleon thought thereon.
Ah! there comes Madame Marigny! and with her
Like to a morn in May, la belle Marie.
O ho! Monsieur! Two things to make the heart
Beat when a man is young. His flag and then
His sweetheart. Au revoir, Monsieur.

Poiré:

(To Madame Marigny, kissing her hand)

Madame!

(*To Marie*)

Marie, the day dawns when I see your face!
You'll dance with me to-night, the Minuet?

Marie:

Mais, oui, Maurice, if Maman gives consent.

Poiré:

The ball, 'tis said, will rival that great feast
DeLaussat gave.

Marie:

O, did you hear, Maurice,
The Marquis Casa Calvo led that dance
With Madame Almonaster, and 'twas said
A queen she looked with jewels in her hair.

Poiré:

Petite, I love your hair best soft and low
And my camellia nestling in the curls.
I'll send you one to-night, ma bien Aimée.

(He kisses her hand and moves away. The herald's bugle is heard, followed by the strains of La Marseillaise again. A child's voice in the crowd calls.)

Child:

Voici les soldats! Look, Gaston, they come!

(Enter Louisiana with proud, queenly bearing. She holds by the hand, La Nouvelle Orléans, also proud and dignified, but a little halting as if walking with reluctance.)

Behind them comes the French Militia. They range themselves on one side of the Place d'Armes, Louisiana and La Nouvelle Orléans in the centre.

Suddenly a cannon shot is heard. The air is rent with cheering interspersed with Vivats.

Then a pause while a salute of twenty-one guns announces the arrival of the American troops.

The music changes to Columbia, and amidst renewed cheering, America enters in great dignity and beauty.

Following closely on horseback are the Commissioners, General Wilkinson and Governor Claiborne, followed by dragoons in red uniforms, artillery and infantry. General Wilkinson and Governor Claiborne dismount at the Hotel de Ville and are escorted with great ceremony to the Assembly Hall.

The troops form themselves in line on the opposite side of the Place d'Armes, America standing in the centre close to Louisiana and La Nouvelle Orléans.

As the music dies away, America speaks.)

America:

Louisiana, hail!

Louisiana:

All hail to you,

America.

America:

And you, my youngest child
La Nouvelle Orléans. This day brings joy.

(To Louisiana)

Louisiana, we have waited long,
Have hoped and dreamed that some day you would stand
And take your place beside us. In our strength
Lies yours, and this dear dreamy child's, begot
Of France.

Louisiana:

America, to-day we stand
Between the old life and the new with hearts
For both. France made us what we are and what
We shall be. We should fail, indeed, if we
At this great moment closed our eyes and hearts
To Calais and to Fontenoy. But know,
The blood that strengthened arm and nerve for France,
Makes noble sinew for a new land's cause.

America:

Right bravely have you spoken!

(To Nouvelle Orléans)

You, my child,
Embrace you thus our cause?

La Nouvelle Orléans:

America,
I come with pride and strength, but still with fear;
A child of France am I. My heart is gay,
I love the light and laughter, and my feet
Keep step to rhythmic music.

America:

Then in truth
You'll teach us well the joy of life.

La Nouvelle Orléans:

Again,
My faith is not as yours. My heart seeks rest
Within our sanctuaries, where is peace.
I love those quiet aisles where cloistered nuns
With whitened fingers count their rosaries.
I love the perfumed incense and the lights
Cast by the waxen candles. There my soul
Spreads out its wings towards the Infinite.

America:

My child, fear not! Your mocking-birds at dawn
Sing many songs. Think you to ask which key
Is sweetest to their singing? So with faith!

La Nouvelle Orléans:

Our nuns, then, need not go? The Ursulines?
'Twas said you'd close our convents, send them forth.

America:

America was born that all might sing
Their faiths upon the keys that suit them best.

Louisiana:

Be of good cheer, sweet Nouvelle Orléans,
America has need of us and we
Of her. We'll teach her joy. Give her our land
Of Spring, of sunshine, and of blooming flowers,
Of children's laughter and of singing birds.
But greater than our deep blue skies, our air
Of sensuous perfume, or our starry nights,
We give our Mississippi, on whose breast
Float down a thousand barges. Without that,
Her soul would stagnate. So right royally,
As those of royal worth, we give ourselves.

America:

Well said, Louisiana; for in truth
You bring us lungs and heart, new breath, new blood;
Without your river with its triple mouth
Our strength would languish, and we needs must die.

(The Herald's trumpet is heard from the Hotel de Ville, on the central balcony of which appear DeLaussat, General Wilkinson, and Governor Claiborne. Amidst renewed cheering DeLaussat speaks.)

DeLaussat:

With greetings come I in the name of France
To you, good citizens of France no more.
I, Peter de Laussat, proclaim to all
That I have read the treaty ceding you,

Your rivers, harbors, lands, possessions all,
To that large portion of the Western world
We call America. The City's keys,
The symbol of your strength, are handed him
Who now becomes your Governor. Salute
Him, Citizens!

Voices in the Crowd:

Vive! Vive! Claiborne! Vive! Vive!

Governor Claiborne:

Once, years ago, La Salle stood near this spot
And raised that flag which now you watch descend.
Good citizens, we should not feel the trust
In this allegiance that you pledge to-day,
Did you not look with tear-dimmed eyes and think
On your past glories underneath that flag.
But dwell not on the past. Look up! Beyond!
See, floating in the breeze the Stars and Stripes!
The symbol of new life, new love, new hope,
New faith, new courage, and unconquered strength!
America awaits you. Cleave to her!
And with her you shall stand against the world.

*(He takes his seat amidst enthusiastic cheering.
Louisiana turns to Captain Charpain, who waits by the
flagpole with bowed head.)*

Louisiana:

Monsieur Charpain and you, French citizens,
Have kept a sacred vigil since the morn.
The noon hour strikes. Ensign Dusseuil, we wait!

(Slowly and sadly the first few bars of La Marseillaise are played. The tricolored flag descends as the Stars and Stripes are raised. They meet for one breathless moment, while a cannon shot is heard.)

The French flag is received into the arms of Major Le Grand, who stands with drawn sword and reverently winds the flag round his body.

Columbia is played by the Military band as the Stars and Stripes float in the breeze.

America holds out her arms to Louisiana who with La Nouvelle Orléans advances towards her.)

(Curtain.)

PART II.

ACT V.

THE FESTIVAL OF PROSPERITY AND PEACE.

PROLOGUE.

*(A trumpet is heard. Curtains are slightly drawn.
Enter Herald.)*

Herald:

With joyous greetings meet we once again
To pay our tribute to our gracious Queen.
As friends we come, who've stood the test of years,
Have seen and known and loved her matchless worth.
Together we have walked as those who watch
By side of one beloved and who know
That age means purpose and unbounded faith,
That years mean knowledge and unbounded love.
More than two cycles have unrolled since once
With bended knee we did her reverence.
Morns have arisen with their rosy tints
And painted fields of Indian wheat and maize,
And suns have set on lands that knew them not.
Together we have watched upon these shores
The birch canoes depart and come instead
Strange ships, the symbols of a conquering race.
New men with purpose strong and fixed intent
Have come and gone and left their impress deep.
Together we have watched the fleur-de-lys
Put forth the beauty of its wondrous bloom,—

Nay more, together, we have watched them stand,
Louisiana in her pride of power
With Crescent Moon, sweet child of joyous France,—
High in their places in the great New World.
And now, sweet friends, with beating, breaking hearts
We speak of that we dare not let unroll
Lest sorrow touch us in the hour of joy,
How men upon the bloody battle-plain
Yielded their lives for nobleness of cause,
For righteous freedom of the hearth and home,
For sacred principle inviolate.
A time majestic in its holy grief,
Titanic in endeavor and resolve,
Unconquered, even if conquered, in its strength.
Of Sumter fallen and illusive hope,
Of Bull Run's far resounding victory,
Of Fort St. Philip and our own despair,—
New Orleans, down-trodden, but unbowed
To any tyrant's yoke, for righteousness
Of cause lifts up its head to meet the stars—
Of Appomattox, how dare speak of them?
The rest is silence. Bitterness is gone.
Hope in our hearts once overtwin'd despair
As ivy overtwin's a lonely grave;
Yet, ivy covers with its rich green leaf,
As Nature hiding scars of time and pain;
So, too, Louisiana's deathless strength

Has covered, clad, and builded her anew.
Her fields are nodding with their amber grain,
Her cotton white as sea-foam blooms afresh,
Tall, dense, and dark the cane and plumaged corn
Vie with each other in their lovers' zeal,
And fruits bend down the trees that lift them high.
To-night we have prepared a joyous feast
That all her children do her reverence.
The bees assiduous and the butterflies,
With birds that wake the morning with their song,
Shall join the pageant of our gracious Queen ;
Prosperity shall come and gentle Peace,
Angelic Peace, who holds within her hands
The hopes and dreams that fill the souls of men.
Make ready, friends. We bid you one and all
Bring near your gifts. Louisiana waits!

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ARTICLE 14

SCENE.

(Curtains are drawn showing Louisiana enthroned, New Orleans standing beside her.)

Background as in Act I.

Herald steps back and takes his stand beside Louisiana. Music is heard—and enter from opposite sides of the stage Prosperity and Peace. Prosperity carries a golden horn of plenty and Peace a long slender palm leaf. Behind them come little brown bumble-bees and gorgeous butterflies of various hues. Birds: Pelicans and Sea-gulls, snowy Herons and Aigrettes, Mocking birds, Woodpeckers, and little brown Thrushes, flock behind. Following closely are the flowers: Yellow Jessamine, Trumpet-Honeysuckle, Magnolias, wild Roses, Azaleas, and Arbutus. Then come little maidens carrying garlands of roses and clover, followed by taller ones with baskets of oleander and crepe-myrtle.

Others follow with long stalks of sugar cane and corn and sheaves of rice.

Others with round baskets, held upon their shoulders, heaped high with snowy cotton.

Following these come young matrons with platters of glistening crystal salt.

Others bearing trays of luscious fruit.

The women are all dressed in classical costumes and walk with dignity and seriousness. As they group themselves on either side of the stage, the music stops and the Herald's trumpet is heard.

ACT VI.
THE CALL TO ARMS.
APRIL, 1917.

CHARACTERS.

America

Louisiana

New Orleans

Prosperity

Peace

Chorus of Mothers

United States troops. Voices from the Dead.

All that have appeared before.

SCENE—The same.

(*A noise is heard without. In great grief enters America.*)

America:

Help! Help! Louisiana, hearken well!
Heed you, my daughter, while this monstrous tale
I now relate that you may tell to all
The sons and daughters of the South-land wide:
Belgium is ravished and her stricken land
A place of howling wolves that gnaw and tear;
Her cities burned, her palaces destroyed,
Her sanctuaries razed, and flung to shame
Her noble wives and daughters. See them lie
In woeful heaps beneath the rising moon!
No moon-flower ever bloomed so sweet, so fair,
As those white bodies sanctified of death.

Louisiana:

And no one has there dared to lift the sword
In their defense?

America:

Yea, England has. She gave
The noblest men that ever wielded sword,
Those splendid sons, who marched unto their doom
With sunshine in their eyes, and asked for naught
But that the Right should triumph over Might.

New Orleans :

And England's other sons in far-off lands,
India, whose magic beauty charms the soul,
Australia, strong and sturdy as an oak,
And that young child she cradled on her breast
And now is yours, America? Calls not
Your Canada across the sea to her?

America :

Yea, all are pledged to meet the common foe.

Louisiana :

And that young giant by the polar star,
Who cast aside her shackles over night
And leaped new-born to freedom and to fame,
Will she not rise and smite?

America :

Yea, in her wrath,
For well she knows Autocracy and false
And broken promises of kings. But she
Is still a fledgling. Knows not yet how strong
Her pinions. Give her time and strength to soar!

New Orleans :

And France, our mother France, has she done naught?

America:

For France hath Belgium met midway the foe.
Think you that France the gallant could behold
The Belgian Calvary nor draw her blade?
Yea, she has fought, is fighting unto death.
Her fields are trodden by the ruthless Hun,
Her towns and cities ash-heaps, Rheims a dream,
Her brave lads lying on the frozen sod
Like shed leaves shattered by the Autumn blast.
But not her heart! Her heart in glory sings!
For well she's learned through travail of her soul
That only Right can triumph, Love can win.

New Orleans:

But we shall help her! Surely we shall smite!
Our blood is hers, her dreams and visions ours.

America:

My dark-eyed daughter by the sapphire Gulf,
Brave France shall hear the pleadings of your heart.
But not for France alone we raise our arms,
Nay, not for Belgium, nor for England's pain,
Nor still for Russia in her new-birth pangs,
Nor even for ourselves, whom danger threatens.
Hear you yet more!

New Orleans:

Yet is there more to hear?

America:

The Lusitania lies beneath the sea;
Her men and women murdered, and her babes
Hold whitened lips against more whitened breasts.

Louisiana:

And shall we not avenge them—we who hold
The torch of liberty to light the world?

America:

My children all shall bear that sacred torch
Into the fetid blackness of the pit.

Prosperity:

And what of me? I shrink before your torch;
My golden grain is brighter than your fire;
I dread its burning glow. O scorch me not!

Peace:

And me, America? I am thy child,
My heart is beating as a frightened bird's.
Would'st clip my wings and put me in a cage?

America:

Nay, gentle Peace. Creep close beside my torch,
For where its light is, there be no clipt wings,
No cruel cages to shut in the soul!

Prosperity, for shame to flaunt your fears.
Would sell yourself to feed the beast of greed?
While thus you prate, the Vulture presses deep
His clutching talons into Freedom's breast.

America:

(To Herald)

Blow you your bugle. Blow to wake the dead,
The noble dead who died in Freedom's cause!

Louisiana:

Yea. Wake them all, that those who sleep may see
Their sheathèd swords flash forth to victory.

(Herald blows. Enter solemnly and slowly to soft music all that have appeared before.)

Indian:

We who lost freedom know best how to die.
Our bows are strung, our arrows tipt with death.

An Old French Settler:

Life is so short, but honor spreads her wings
Through the far halls of vast eternity.
O give me one short life to give again!

Another French Settler:

You have awaked us. Let us tarry not.
Haste, haste, France needs us! France, we come, we come!

(*Commotion without. Music. Voices are heard. Enter Procession of Mothers.*

They are dressed in white like the Madonnas of Gabriel Max, with hoods and soft flowing robes belted in at the waist with white cords. They walk in with arms outstretched and heads held triumphantly.)

A Mother:

Nay, ours be now the day. Their day be done!
No man can twice give life for freedom's cause.
Our sons take up the swords their sires ensheathed,
Our precious lads who were not born in vain.
All these have tilled the soil, but we shall reap.
They struck the flint, but we shall bear the fire,
Democracy, the torch that lights the world.

Another Mother:

Louisiana, take my splendid son
He is so young, so strong, so brave!

Another Mother:

And mine!

My little Pierre is grown to be a man.
How fast time flies! 'Twas only yesterday
I buckled on his grandsire's sword in jest.
To-day that sword shall pierce the Vulture's heart.

Another Mother:

And mine! My boy, my only lad! He was
So tiny when his father died. I taught

Him how to climb the tallest tree and peep
Into the nest to count the fledglings, watch
Them try their wings—but not to touch! Raoul
Would die for freedom. Let him march beneath
Your torch, America, that he may see
Democracy enkindle all the world!

Louisiana:

(To Herald)

Call in those splendid youths. All, all shall go!

(To Mothers)

A new dawn rises on the troubled earth,
For now our day-star pierces through the gloom,
The star of freedom borne by these on high.
And you, brave mothers, that once open flung
The gates of death that you might give them life,
Read you the meaning of the star, and know
How great a thing it is to save the world!

(Herald blows)

(Star-Spangled Banner is heard.)

*Enter soldiers with raised swords and guns, preceded
by flag bearer.*

*The flag is handed to America, who stands on one side
of Louisiana, New Orleans on the other.*

The others group themselves around.)

(Curtain.)

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